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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 31, 1962

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NSC Executive Committee Record of Action, October 31, 1962, 6:00 PM Meeting No. 15

1. Secretary Rusk reported on the unsatisfactory talks between U Thant and Castro. A full report is expected when U Thant reaches New York later tonight.

2. The President decided that tomorrow:

a. No U-2 flights would be flown over Cuba.

b. Up to fourteen low-level sorties would be made, but no plane would make more than one pass over each area. The President said we were anxious to stop aerial surveillance as soon as the UN provides a satisfactory substitute. He added that this should be a matter of priority for us because, if a U.S. plane is shot down, we may have to take retaliatory measures. Kuznetsov will be informed of our aerial reconnaissance plans for tomorrow, but no public announcement will be made.

3. The President authorized the reinstitution of the quarantine at dawn tomorrow, subject to final clearance following a report later tonight from Secretary Rusk on the U Thant-Castro talks. U.S. ships will hail all ships entering the quarantine zone. If their reply as to name, port of origin and cargo is satisfactory, they will be allowed to proceed to port. If the reply is unsatisfactory, no ship will be boarded without specific authorization of the President which the Secretary of Defense is to obtain after consulting with the Secretary of State. Announcement of the resumption of the quarantine will be made as soon as the final decision is made.

4. Acting Director of USIA Wilson reported on themes being used in official broadcasts to Cuba. The President stressed the importance of making clear that the present situation involved all Latin American countries joining with us in opposition to Cuba rather than merely a U.S. - Cuba confrontation. He asked that for this week we play down public attacks on Castro.

5. The President directed all government officials talking to Russian officials to discuss only Cuba and the removal of the offensive weapons. If the Russians raise other matters, they should be told that we are prepared to listen now and talk later, but first we must conclude the Cuban crisis.

McGeorge Bundy

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